

# THE LIFE OF THE SPIRIT

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## EDITORIAL

ONE of the effects, in our fallen state, of the inheritance of original sin is that the integral relationship between soul and body in us is, in certain respects, disturbed and in a sense turned topsy-turvy. Our lower or animal nature with its instinctive appetites, passions, emotions and inclinations is no longer properly geared into our higher or rational nature of mind and will. Original sin is the loss of the supernatural life of grace which bound these elements in our make-up into an integral whole in which the higher exercised its proper control over the lower. The actual sin of Adam and Eve which caused this loss could not have been a sin in which the weakness and frailty of human flesh played any part, as it does in so many of our own actual sins, for no such weakness existed in them. Our first parents, whose human nature was integral, had the lower part of their natures held in a vice-like grip by the perfect functioning of the rational will under the power of grace. The only temptation they could undergo was a direct assault from without upon the free and independent, though finite, self-hood which was theirs in virtue of their rational and immortal souls; a temptation assisted no doubt by diabolical intervention, in the presentation of situations to their imaginations as good and desirable, which were in fact not so, but aimed directly at inducing the free will to defy with deliberate and full intent the known truth of their dependence upon their Creator and their duty of obedience to him and to his law; a temptation, that is, to pride, the setting up of the finite, self-conscious self in opposition to the infinite God. Nowhere I think has this psychological situation been more graphically and dramatically described than by Professor C. S. Lewis in his novel *Perelandra*.

When indeed the primary actual sin of our first parents did in fact take place it was catastrophic in its effects. For the lower self-hood of instinct, emotion, appetite, passion was suddenly liberated by the loss of grace, and the consequent darkening of the mind and debility of the will. The lower nature, good in itself as all God's creation is, took command in many ways, and because this command was inordinate, a function it had neither the right

nor the capacity to exercise, the deterioration of the whole rational make-up of the human race resulted from it. When the fruits of redemption, which could vanquish the damage of original sin, were given to the world by the founding of Christ's Mystical Body, the Church on earth, and by the incorporation into it of human souls in baptism, the right ordering of the rational human economy was restored in power and capacity; man became once more *capax gloriae*, capable of attaining heaven by the obedience to God's law which is love.

But only on condition of the acceptance of the grace offered in all its fullness. Hence it is that traces of the disorder of original sin remain in us and exercise such a powerful influence in our lives. We are not wholly prepared to die and be buried with Christ in baptism in order to rise with him to a complete newness of life. And one of the legacies of original sin that remains with us most persistently is the tendency we have to allow our thought, and consequently our wills, to be dominated and directed by our emotions. Hence the great need of securing that objectivity in our spiritual life which the first article in the present number of *THE LIFE OF THE SPIRIT* urges with such point and cogency. Christ our Lord has made ample provision for the securing of this objectivity in the manner in which he has set up the Church, his Mystical Body, and in the measures he has ordained for the perpetuation of its sacramental life.

He has endowed his Church with a teaching authority which can make no mistake in what, by its supreme verdict, it asserts to be the truth which comes from him, since it is safeguarded in this office by the guidance of the Holy Spirit. This does not mean that the members of the Church are dispensed from the necessity of thought by receiving ready-made 'oracles' to all their questions, doubts and difficulties. They must use their own intelligence and will in appropriating to themselves and making their own these truths, enquiring by the use of reason how the ever-growing body of scientific and historical truth can find its proper place as the setting in which we receive the immutable truths of God's revelation, and seeing the intimate connection of one truth with another in its whole content. This is all part of the process of transfer, so to call it, from notional to real apprehension, which must take place by grace and the gifts of the Holy Spirit in every person, according to his capacity, be he simple or learned, in

order that faith may reach its full stature. Each member of Christ is thus able to be certain with the certainty of faith of the foundation truths which must be the starting point of this process. Apart from infallibility there can be no such objective certainty, and apart from objective certainty there is no norm for the elimination of subjective and emotional thinking.

In the same way the whole notion of sacramental validity is to provide a secure certainty that when the appropriate ordained signs and words are used the inner effect of grace will follow, provided no personal obstacle of sin or indifference is interposed to prevent it. Thus do sacraments, by their very nature, provide a guarantee, quite apart from emotional feeling, that such grace has actually been given and received.

We are printing in this number, to carry to a further point the idea of the necessity of an objective spirituality, two articles on baptism, the sacrament of initiation; the one doctrinal in its scope, the other liturgical, for it is the study of Christian doctrine and the expression of that doctrine in liturgy that can bring home to us most effectively the full meaning of the redemptive work wrought for us and in us by Christ and mediated to us by his Church. A further article deals with the relation of Christian liturgy to the liturgy of the synagogue thereby emphasizing the objectivity and continuity of worship based upon the inspired Word of God.

In the course of the coming year we hope to print from time to time further articles, on the other sacraments, written from the same two points of view, providing readers of *THE LIFE OF THE SPIRIT* by this means with some help in building their own personal lives upon a sound and objective basis of sacramental spirituality.



## TOWARDS AN OBJECTIVE SPIRITUAL LIFE<sup>1</sup>

THOMAS DEMAN, O.P.

**M**ANY people have a genuine desire for perfection and consistently strive to become better. Apart from the small failings which are inevitable, they keep up a constant and generous effort with a view to their spiritual pro-

<sup>1</sup> Translation by Kathleen Pond of an article which appeared in *La Vie Spirituelle* Sept.-Oct. 1944, since reproduced in pamphlet form by the Procure Générale du Clergé, 3 rue de Mezières, Paris VIe.

gress. Good will is the last thing they lack. *It is all the more important, then, that such people should not find that they have made a mistake as to the fundamental direction of their effort.* In exhorting them to become increasingly more generous, one has not even begun to tackle the problem, for what they need is not exhortation so much as direction. We should like to indicate here the main lines along which the spiritual life develops in accordance with prudence, in contradistinction to notions which are perhaps currently admitted, but which, in our opinion, have been insufficiently examined.

Thus people sometimes set out to 'correct themselves of their faults' and to 'avoid sin'. There is certainly good cause to work at this. But even supposing the effort were successful, what positive advantage would have been gained? Free from sin, free from faults, a soul is purified from evil, but is not yet in possession of the good. It is better, assuredly, to set as one's objective the acquisition and practice of the virtues. The elimination of sins and faults is naturally implied in this, but there is, in addition, aspiration towards something of real value by which the soul is enriched. To be without sin is still only a preliminary condition or, if you like, *the negative aspect of a spiritual situation which demands its positive complement.* The notion of virtue deserves to occupy a more important place than that of sin. The struggle against the latter becomes too thankless a task unless it is regarded as involving at the same time the advancement of virtue. Some souls are haunted by their sins. If they are not obsessed to an even greater degree by zeal for their virtues they will be unhappy and their efforts liable to prove a failure. Moreover, we should be careful to understand by virtues those qualities thanks to which the soul finds itself established in affinity with good, prompt to accomplish and ready to delight in it. It may be that in the beginning of the spiritual life, we are drawn to give more attention to sin than to virtue, since the urgent task is to dislodge the enemy; but afterwards people ought to know what is the purpose of the struggle they are making and that a time should come when, freed from sin, they will find their joy in the accomplishment of good.

The word *detachment* also holds sway over certain people's spiritual lives. It is authentic and no one dreams of eliminating it. It expresses the necessity we are under of renouncing such good things as in our particular case form an obstacle to greater good.

But viewed in this way, detachment is precisely and solely orientated towards *attachment*. Its justification is not to be found within itself. *Perfection consists in the substitution of the better for the worse, not only in the suppression of the worse.* It should, moreover, be realized that attachment to the things of the spiritual life requires a special education of the soul, and that it has not been acquired, indeed is far from being acquired, when people are satisfied with practising detachment in regard to natural things. There are two methods involved. *Distaste for the world cannot be equated with a longing for God.* It is recognized that if we do not renounce the world, we do not find God, but to have renounced the world does not immediately give us God. The adaptation to this new objective and its realization still have to be achieved. The positive work begins when the other is completed. Or, rather, detachment should only be put into operation concurrently with an attachment in which the deprivations one inflicts upon oneself in other directions are compensated and more than compensated. How many souls who are set upon renouncing themselves fail to aim at attachment! The sign that they have not replaced the thing they have cast aside by something better, is that they remain occupied with themselves. Their attention is focussed on the feelings they experience and the efforts they make. They watch themselves in every detail and perhaps with a certain amount of worry. They are anxious to know if their generosity is greater today than it was yesterday. If they were attached to something which drew and attracted them, they would not cross-examine themselves in this way. The *lack of aim* is the great trouble from which certain spiritual lives suffer. We no longer have the objectives we have detached ourselves from, but we certainly do not yet possess those we have neglected to acquire: whence it comes about that people fall back on themselves treating their own soul as an objective whereas its very purpose is to take us beyond itself. Enamoured of their perfection, certain people give themselves up to refinements of analysis about their interior state which leave one dumbfounded. They have never finished prying into the remote corners of their soul. They wear themselves out with their self-examinations. One would think that their soul was the only one in the world. When we look at such people, it is easier to understand that detachment alone is not sufficient for the attainment of perfection.

### *Humility and Obedience in Objective Spirituality*

According to whether one's spiritual life is established on the negative or the positive formula, subjectively or objectively, one is drawn to practise the virtues which it is commonly agreed play an important part in it, namely *humility* and *obedience*; but differently. For the man who is chiefly seeking to avoid pride and who keeps his eyes fixed upon himself, humility will consist in some sense in a forced attitude. With no point of comparison in respect of which to judge ourselves, we have no other resource, to become small in our own eyes, but actually to belittle ourselves or else to persist in false estimates of ourselves. *Whence comes the difficulty in many cases of reconciling humility with truth and even more with magnanimity.* We dare not recognize our qualities, and we exaggerate our failings lest, if we see ourselves as we really are, we fail to preserve humility. Modest actions are systematically cultivated, inferior work is sought after, anything which might exalt the person and bring with it the distinction of a certain importance, is dreaded, and we purchase the right to be both humble and true towards ourselves by the deliberate sacrifice of our full development. Is it not true that many have renounced the full affirmation of their personality in their fear of failing to reconcile it with the demands of humility? *They have stunted their development in order to retain the liberty to think themselves small.*

This is a virtue, then, it would seem, that is always accompanied by serious drawbacks. If people think that, it is because they have understood humility in the wrong way. People co-equate it with abasement pure and simple, whereas the abasement which is needed is that in which one holds oneself *in regard to God*. This last clause changes everything. In the case of the man whose only objective is himself, it is perfectly true that humility only comes into the scheme of things at the expense of other virtues: it suffers if one is fair to oneself or if one is magnanimous. But the error lies in having no other end than oneself. Once God becomes our objective, nothing is easier for the humble man than to cultivate both fairness to himself and magnanimity. He can perform the highest actions and give his personality the full development of which it is capable; he will recognize himself for what he is, with his failings, certainly, and his insufficiency, but also with his gifts and qualities, whether of the physical, intellectual or moral order: there is no danger for his humility.

For in relation to God he remains little. He knows that he is dependent on a sovereign power and will. He is merely occupying the place where God has set him and everything of good he has in him is measured strictly against the liberality which it has pleased God to have in his regard. *To stay humble, such a man has no need either to belittle himself or to lie to himself.* He is what he is, he intends to grow to the full stature of which he is capable. He remains rooted, however, in the conviction of his fundamental littleness, for he depends on God. We might even say that the greater the stature he attains to, the more sharply defined does the conviction of his dependence become in him: for the more one has received, the more dependent one is. To remain humble there is no need at all to twist the soul or to force oneself to be only a poor counterfeit of one's real self. To relate oneself to God frees one from such servitude. Humility is a virtue which so to speak forces the spiritual life to become objective.

Similarly with obedience. This virtue is often thought of as intended, like humility, to keep the subject in an attitude of submission which is supposed to have a value in itself. It is treated as an ascetical virtue, of personal interest. And to make it more effective in this sense, no hesitation is shown in extending its sphere and multiplying its acts. People think they have never obeyed enough. Initiative is shunned as a source of error and vanity or as at least depriving one of the merit of obedience. People make it a rule for themselves to act as little as possible on their own initiative. Obviously obedience understood in this way in turn constitutes a danger to another virtue, prudence, the virtue by which a man is made apt to conduct his own life in accordance with the judgments he makes and the decisions he takes. No one is dispensed from cultivating prudence. *Obedience is certainly not intended to make this virtue pointless.* With their minds fixed on qualities such as humility and obedience, certain spiritual persons cheerfully resolve to sacrifice other virtues, such as fairness and magnanimity, or, again, prudence. The cause in both cases is the same: they have formed for themselves a wholly subjective notion both of obedience and humility. They forget that humility is constituted in reference to God; they forget that obedience is a virtue not of personal, but of *social* interest. The reason for the virtue of obedience is the distribution of men into rulers and ruled. And the reason for such a distribution of men is because the

universe is thereby made more beautiful and the common good by that means better assured. Obedience consists of submission. One does not obey in order to maintain oneself in this state of submission, *but in order to concur in a good*, the good which enables the hierarchical organization of men to be achieved, and the dimensions of which exceed the good that the individual left to himself is capable of contributing, however great it be. In this sense obedience is *more a collaboration than a submission*. It appeals to the subject's sense of the common good no less than to that of his subordinate condition. It fits in perfectly with the subject's initiative, both with those he is permitted to make use of within the framework of obedience and those he exercises in the spheres in which he is self-dependent. Prompt to obey, he is equally prompt to act of his own accord. He is in the service of the good, and the good requires both dispositions. He is careful to discern accurately the precise limits of his condition as a subject not with a view to obeying as little as possible, but with that of *obeying where it is necessary and acting on his own initiative where it is necessary*. We should understand that in the spiritual life there are no one-track courses to be taken as if we were to say: For my part, I shall cultivate humility, or, again: I shall cultivate obedience. Once more, by following such a rule, we should be unfair to the other virtues. And thus we should be condemned to an impoverished spiritual life.

The famous question of the obedience of the judgment should be decided in accordance with the same principles. Let us not seek to know whether this conception of obedience has not, indeed, come about through certain superiors, who found it convenient that their subjects should have no judgment of their own. Let us confine our attention to the subjects themselves. Those who make it a law unto themselves to conform their judgment to that of the superiors certainly yield to the impulse we were already speaking of: they wish to remain in submission and the more extensive the submission, the better the obedience becomes. It is essential, however, to understand that *obedience is in no sense a virtue of the intelligence, but of the will*. In no sense is it intended to lead us to judge as the superior judges but to make our will pliable to the command we receive from him. It leaves intact our responsibility for taking care to judge rightly and think in accordance with truth. It may easily happen that one thinks

exactly the contrary of what the superior thinks, and yet one will not thereby be prevented from giving him a whole-hearted, prompt and joyful obedience. Such an attitude is less naïve than the other. Yet it takes more account of the real relationship which unites the subject with the superior. If it is distorted in the case of certain people, it is only because of the notion they have made for themselves of an obedience which has its purpose in itself, so to speak, whereas obedience is inscribed in an order of things in which personal preoccupations are largely superseded.

In a more general way, subjective spirituality will be characterized by a preoccupation, before all else, with the efforts one makes whereas in objective spirituality we are primarily desirous of practising good. Effort is an eminently subjective trait. If people value the actions they posit in terms of the effort they cost, the reason is that they have not yet become aware of the order of actions to their ends, whence their real value derives. To know whether an action costs us something or not, is not the point. We should ask ourselves what is its purpose and in what it consists. The hierarchy of actions among themselves is established in accordance with this rule. It is necessary to go so far as to say that a good, or better action performed without effort is worth more than if it is accomplished with difficulty: for it is the sign that one is then so much the more in harmony with the good. Pursued to its limits, the virtuous life should no longer bring effort in its train, and it would be all the more meritorious for that. It is often difficult to make spiritual people understand that merit is not bound up with effort, but with the joyous eagerness with which one accomplishes good. It is because they have not yet got beyond the subjective notion of the spiritual life. From what has been said it can be judged how disastrous it would be to cultivate in oneself, so to speak, the necessity of having to make efforts. Is it quite certain that some people do not practise making virtue difficult? They are afraid to find too much joy in practising good. They shun the pleasure they might find in it as a misfortune. Nowhere does the subjective idea of the spiritual life more clearly show its insufficiency and the constituent vice from which it suffers.

### *Cultivation of Objective Virtues*

If the practice of certain virtues needs rectification, as we have seen, it is no less necessary, in a spiritual life objectively understood,

to give their full development to other virtues, with which one might be in danger of concerning oneself less. We refer to virtues of which the specific character is precisely to be objective, that is, ordained to a good which is distinct from the virtuous subject. They cause the man who practises them to get away from himself, attaching him to realities from which he receives an enrichment such as he would never have found in the care of his own soul alone. Certain virtues, indeed, are made for the good of the virtuous person. Through them he acquires self-mastery and brings about the rule of order within himself. No spiritual life is possible where these virtues have not played their part. One will thus begin by cultivating the cardinal virtues of temperance and fortitude, with all those others which concur in the discipline of the passions. In this way we take care of our soul in the exact meaning of the expression. We treat ourselves like someone who has to be made beautiful and good. We do not yet set before ourselves any other objective than the self. This is the first task of all. It is only, however, to be classed as an *initiation*. It predisposes to better tasks. Temperance and fortitude do not exhaust the catalogue of the virtues: there remain justice and the theological virtues. *With them we go out from the self*, in them the spiritual life will experience its true flowering. We have not made ourselves good and beautiful in order to take pleasure in such subjective excellence indefinitely, but in order to make certain of having the liberty to devote our attention to ends which, since they surpass man, will have the power to enlarge him to their own measure. Let us say a word about these virtues and define their role in a spiritual life which is conceived according to prudence.

### *Justice and its Connections*

We do not usually think of *justice* as a virtue of spiritual interest. Its function is with the relationships of social life, and its matter is secular in its essence. The care of one's perfection is one thing, it is thought, that of rendering every man his due, another. Justice, again, is but an ordinary virtue; care for perfection, on the other hand, distinguishes souls set aside for a higher vocation. These reflections have a certain amount of truth in them. Justice is, indeed, the elementary form of the moral life and the most unformed consciences have some realization of this type of virtue: people already know that it is good to render to every

man his due, when they are still unaware than it is good to control one's passions. But whatever be the origin and order of development of moral consciousness, it has to be maintained that, from the point of view of value, *justice takes priority over temperance and fortitude*. The two latter, as we have said, put order into the subject's passions. Justice, on the contrary, adapts the subject to the good of society, which is of higher value than the good estate of some one particular person. It befits man in so far as he has become part of a whole. It links him up harmoniously with the whole and makes him, for the future, give as objective to his actions this multiple and so to speak unlimited good which is called the common good. Will people not realize that the sense of the common good represents a stage in the development of the spiritual life? It could happen that the latter might engender a kind of egoism. Certain people are concerned with their soul to the extent that they come to lose sight of the human ensemble in which they are nevertheless embedded. Even supposing they respect commutative justice, they certainly do not cultivate in themselves legal justice, the justice which aims at the common good and ordains the practice of the other virtues to this great end. The familiar contrast of the earthly city and the heavenly country perhaps contributes to lessen, in the eyes of spiritual people, the lustre of a virtue of which Aristotle said that neither the splendour of the dawn or that of the setting sun were comparable to it. The widespread notion of the spiritual life as something chiefly contemplative by nature must also prove an obstacle to the esteem of a virtue turned towards external operations. But we still have to decide whether the spiritual is not involved in a social milieu and whether the common good does not retain its superiority over one's own particular good. No zeal for interior perfection confers the right to withdraw oneself from the obligations deriving from the actual condition in which one finds oneself. *It is not for anyone to live among men as if he were alone in the world.* And how could it be right to neglect the resources of virtue which other men and the ensemble of social life constitute for us? One is certainly wrong in abstracting such things from the constituent elements of a spiritual life. The idea of solitude is perhaps responsible for its share of the dichotomy against which we are protesting. The idea of the spiritual life in society should be substituted. Since man is a social animal, how could he sanctify

himself torn away from his vital milieu? Justice deserves to be re-integrated in the spiritual life. It is readily granted that obedience is one of the distinctive virtues of the soul devoted to perfection; but we have said that obedience is to be understood in relation to the promotion of the common good: it belongs to that order of virtue which is governed by the cardinal virtue of justice. Other virtues should figure in the same context, particularly the noble virtues of respect which the presence of other men around us involves, and which should find their chief expression in the virtue of religion.

For it is worthy of note that the latter presents itself as the transposition on to the plane of God of the attitudes of respect called for on our part by the different categories of human persons with whom we are in touch. *Religion is a kind of justice.* It renders to God what belongs to him, as justice makes us render to our fellow-men what they have the right to receive from us. There is no spiritual life at all without religion, assuredly. Hence it is that we must agree that justice, in its highest form, belongs to the spiritual life. The sense of the other than oneself and the care to pay what one owes that other are common both to religion and justice. One must never be afraid of acknowledging this relationship. It may perhaps lead to the rectification of the idea that certain spiritual people are liable to form of religion. They tend to make it an inward thing, limited to a more or less passive attitude of the soul in the presence of the Majesty of God. Worship with its accompanying activities and display of external manifestations does not find favour with them. Yet worship is essential to religion. It is through worship that man's debt towards God is acquitted—imperfectly, we grant. The religious mind is eager to express its homage in this effective way. Far from being confined to interior occupations, spiritual life thus comes to be integrated with the whole order of the liturgy. Mental prayer does not suffice for everything. If it is a good sign for a spiritual life not to have to eliminate any of the authentic activities in which the Christian religion has always expressed itself, it will be agreed that objective spirituality shows an advantage on this point.

(*To be concluded*)

## THE SACRAMENTS: I—BAPTISM

LAURENCE BRIGHT, O.P.

THE sacraments, and baptism first of all, are the means by which Christ unites us to the Church which is his body.

Yet we may well wonder how the pouring of a little water, the brief statement of the priest, 'I baptize you in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost', can effect so great a change. Of course it is possible simply to reply 'because God wills it to be so', and perhaps ultimately there is nothing more to be said, but it is still open to us to explore the meaning of such mysteries as far as we can. The truths revealed by God and handed on to us by the Church are indeed mysteries, acceptable only to those who have received the grace of faith, but faith is given to our minds and needs to be thought about. We cannot give a real assent to revealed truth unless we have thought about it within the living context of the Church and in this way made it our own. This has always been the work of theologians within the Church, but there is a real sense in which every Christian is called on to be a theologian in the measure allowed by his ability and leisure: otherwise he runs the risk of remaining only half a Christian, unable to give reason for the faith that is in him.

Now the faith comes to each of us in a living tradition, which we hand on to others as we live it. Every Christian shares in this activity, because of the unity of the mystical body, throughout time and space. The mysteries of the faith are not stored in ancient documents, recoverable only by those who are archaeologically minded; the word of God lives continuously in the Church, so that each member of it shares in the work of deepening our understanding. The mystery is with us here and now simply because Christ is with us here and now. Each of us has to take his part in the work of understanding and sharing with Christ's other members. Since we shall be thinking of things that seem remote, of the waters of Jordan and the passage of the Red Sea, it is as well to bear in mind the essential contemporaneity of these Christian mysteries which belong as much to the twentieth century as to any other. Christ is the same yesterday, today and tomorrow, so that St Paul writes as truly to us as to the church of Corinth: 'You are the epistle of Christ . . . written not with ink

but with the Spirit.' (2 Cor. 3, 3.) Our job is always to make 'the word of truth of the gospel . . . bring forth fruit and grow in us' (Col. 1, 5-6).

In these articles, I shall try to explain briefly something of what the Church teaches about the Sacraments. They are meant to be a starting-point for discussion rather than an exhaustive dogmatic treatment. It may be as well to begin by considering the sacraments in general. People sometimes ask why it is that men must still work out their salvation by sacramental means if Christ's death saves all mankind. But each individual Christian has to make that sacrifice his own, has to be joined to Christ through the Church. This is first the result of faith, by which in a real sense we put on the mind of Christ. Faith is sufficient to save those who through no fault of their own are unable to share in the sacramental life of the visible Church. But normally faith is only the beginning of our Christian life; the sacraments complete it. They allow us not merely to apprehend Christ, but to possess him. They are the means by which Christ joins us to himself in love, enabling us to live his life on earth and so, after our death, in heaven.

But what are sacraments? First of all signs of what is hidden; the Greek word for sacrament is that which has given us our English word 'mystery'. Hidden mysteries are revealed and made visible to us by these signs. This is the sense in which we can say that the greatest sacrament is the Incarnation itself, by which the invisible God showed himself in history. In a well-known passage St Paul speaks of 'the mystery which hath been hidden from ages and generations, but now is manifested to his saints, to whom God would make known the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is Christ, in you the hope of glory' (Col. 1, 26-27). God was manifested in Christ and Christ is manifested now in the Church through the sacraments which continue his life in us. The sacraments are signs of faith, and the grace it brings; they are signs of the Church, by which she shows that she is the living Christ.

But though the sacraments are signs making intelligible hidden mysteries to the mind of faith, they are more than this: for they cause the things which they signify. All water has a significance, which will be discussed shortly; but the water of baptism actually brings about what ordinary water only symbolizes. Both aspects, the significant and the causal, must be borne in mind if we are to

understand the sacraments. As a sign, each sacrament represents hidden things; it brings past, present and future together here and now. In the past there was the activity of Christ, his baptism, his passion, his resurrection; in the present, there is the special grace of the sacrament, relating to our place in Christ's mystical body; in the future, there will be our eternal life. All these a sacrament shows us now, and all these it really gives us. Its effect on the Christian who receives it is to bring him into a relationship with Christ who was in history. The sacraments are the means by which Christ has been, as he always will be, present in his Church, throughout the long centuries of Christian history.

We can now consider the sacrament of baptism, and apply these general remarks. The material is flowing water. But what is its significance? What do the spoken words make it effect? We must not think of the water familiar to us in our urban civilisation, tamed and under control, merely on tap. If we are to realise the significance our Lord meant it to have for us, we must turn to the Old Testament, in particular to the story of the Exodus. There is nothing fanciful in this. We have only to remember our Lord's insistence, especially in his appearances after the resurrection, that we should search the scriptures for the explanation of all he had done and suffered. St John actually presents the events of Christ's life on earth as a parallel to those of the Exodus, seeing our Lord as a new Moses leading a chosen people to a new and better kingdom. It is a theme to which St Paul constantly returns, and has a central place in the ancient Easter vigil before the baptismal ceremonies of the early Church. Israel under Moses fled from the sinful land of Egypt, pursued by Pharao and his chariots. The waters divided and they passed through to safety. But those same waters which brought life to Israel brought death to the Egyptians. 'And the waters returned, and covered the chariots and the horsemen of all the army of Pharao, who had come into the sea after them: neither did there so much as one of them remain. But the children of Israel marched through the midst of the sea upon dry land, and the waters were to them as a wall on the right hand and on the left.' (Exodus 14; 28-29.) The significance of water lies in this double aspect: it brings death and it brings life. Through the command of Christ we die to sin in the waters of baptism and pass through to newness of life. As St Paul says, 'Know you not that all we, who are baptized in Christ Jesus,

are baptised in his death? For we are buried together with him by baptism into death; but as Christ is risen from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we also may walk in newness of life' (Rom. 6, 3-4). Baptism enables us to share the death of Christ, his conquest of sin, and so also to share in the resurrection which brought eternal life. It is important to see how St Paul lays emphasis on the fact that the effects of baptism come about through its uniting us to Christ. In the early Church the baptismal rite showed this very clearly, for the candidate went down into the waters and emerging again on the other side was received by the Bishop, representative of the Church. Though he went alone into the water, he came out a member of Christ's mystical body. Even so had the passage through the Red Sea turned the fleeing rabble of Israelites into a nation united under their leader Moses ready to conquer for themselves a kingdom. To Hebrew thought a nation was almost a single person, closely identified with its leader or king. Their conception is so foreign to our own way of thinking that we find it difficult to take St Paul literally when he tells us that as baptized Christians we are one with Christ, 'for in one spirit were we all baptized into one body' (1 Cor. 12, 13). We tend to weaken the great image of Christians as members of Christ, thinking of it as little more than a metaphor. But Paul's language is quite unequivocal: 'You *are* the body of Christ, and members of member' (1 Cor. 12, 27) he tells the Corinthians. Baptism could not make us members of the kingdom of heaven unless it united us to our king. Such union must affect our whole Christian life. For just as the head of the body acts through each member of the body, so Christ acts through us. Whatever we do, so long as it is not sinful, is Christ's action as well as ours. Our natural life is not destroyed by grace, but is transfigured. We can indeed say 'with Christ I am nailed to the cross. And I live, now not I; but Christ liveth in me' (Gal. 2, 19-20). As Christ's, our actions are now pleasing to God; yet they remain at the same time entirely our own, meriting for us eternal life in union with him. This is the meaning of St Paul's statement that 'as many of you as have been baptized in Christ, have put on Christ' (Gal. 3, 27). It is the Christian's astonishing privilege to have been allowed to share the divine nature (cf. 2 Peter 1, 4.)

But what is this land of Egypt from which the new Israelite

flees to Christ? The world into which every man is born, given over to Satan who is its prince since he brought about the sin of our first parent Adam. This doctrine of original sin is difficult to explain except from the point of view which has been developed above. The very fact of being born a member of the human race gives each man a solidarity with Adam, who is the head of that race. The nature which has passed from him through countless generations to us must be a nature subject to death, as his was after the fall. For though he had been granted the grace of immortality, along with many other benefits, while his mind and will were united with God, God withdrew these gifts as incompatible with Adam's new state after he fell. If Adam had never sinned, we too should possess human nature as he originally possessed it; now physical death is the inevitable consequence of birth. For this reason is it natural to speak of baptism as a new birth. We remember the words of our Lord to Nicodemus: 'Amen, amen I say to thee, unless a man be born again of water and the Holy Ghost he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.' (John 3, 5.) For in the waters of baptism we are released, as it were by death, from our bondage to Adam, and are joined to him who by accepting death overcame it. We have become the spiritual descendants of a second Adam. The contrast is developed by St Paul in the balanced antitheses of Romans 5: for example 'as by the disobedience of one man, many were made sinners; so also by the obedience of one many shall be made just'. (v. 19.)

Since baptism brings about a total change in those who receive it, it can never be repeated. The Church has always condemned as heresy the suggestion that the lapsed could be rebaptized. A man who has once passed through the healing waters need never go through them again, since God has sealed him with a special mark. St Paul says: 'Grieve not the holy spirit of God, whereby you are sealed unto the day of redemption.' (Ephes. iv. 30). We must distinguish this ineffaceable seal from those effects of baptism which require certain right dispositions in the person receiving it. A man, for example, can refuse to accept the gift of faith which is offered to him as a member of Christ. Yet if he is baptised faith will be given him as soon as he ceases to reject it. The question is indeed sometimes asked how infant baptism can be effective if baptism requires the possibility of faith. It is one of the most striking demonstrations of the real

unity of the mystical body that faith can here be supplied by the Church. As the child is brought to the doors of the baptistry the question is put: 'What do you ask of the Church of God?' And the answer: 'Faith'.

Baptism then is the means by which we are joined to the body of our Redeemer. It is therefore the gateway to all the other sacraments, which would be meaningless and ineffective to those who had not been so joined. Indeed it is not possible to understand the other sacraments until we have grasped the significance of baptism as the cause of our incorporation in Christ. I hope to develop this theme in later articles.



## THE SACRAMENT OF FAITH

CONRAD PEPLER, O.P.

ONE of the early names for Baptism was the 'Sacrament of Faith', and those who were baptized became the 'enlightened'. To think of this Sacrament simply as an initiation rite, performed once and then left in the background as one would walk through the front door of a house and shut it before settling down in the drawing room to be comfortably at home; to think of it simply as the formal entry into the Church is to miss its constant power to raise the Christian to the heights of holiness. The earlier Christian understood that it brought an entirely new light into the newly baptized's life and that light shone and transformed everything so that as his eyes grew accustomed to its power they could eventually perceive the glory of God, and sustained by baptismal grace reach to the heights of prayer and union with God. For the spiritual reality into which the Christian is introduced cannot be divided into neat little pieces to be digested stage by stage as the Christian makes his way along the road, refreshed by one grace after another. Ultimately every grace is the same, a share in the divine life, which is undivided and indivisible. It has sometimes been thought that the mystical life of unitive prayer and the heights of contemplation were above the normal life of faith, that the gifts of the Holy Spirit brought something quite different from the general run of grace and faith. But this would make a radical division

between the gifted few and the ordinary Christian, which leaves the perfect love of union outside the possibility of the baptismal graces received on entry in the Church.

Our Lord did in fact present the whole extent of the mystical life to Nicodemus when he revealed to him the immense power of the baptism by water and the Holy Spirit which he was about to introduce. Archbishop Goodier has written: 'The words of Jesus to Nicodemus are the basis of all true mysticism.' (*The Public Ministry*, 1, 65.) And from that revelation the work of the great Fathers and theologians has carried on the same tradition of the foundation of the true mystical life being in the sacrament of initiation. Père Boulanger, writing of the treatise on Baptism in St Thomas's *Summa*, has said: 'If the philosopher does not here derive pleasure from subtle distinctions, the theologian will savour what is more desirable beyond a doubt—some brilliant glimpses of the profound mysteries of our divine sonship and of our belonging to Christ . . . paragraphs that are the most substantial nourishment for true piety and for a virile Christian life.'

We are becoming at last familiar with the meaning of the Pasch as the centre of the whole Christian life. The new liturgies for Easter have brought us back to the importance of 'Easter duties', not merely as the minimum due from any practising Catholic but as the source from which spring the living waters, cleansing and nourishing the child of God from year to year. The principal sacrament of that season is in fact not so much penance or even the Holy Eucharist, as the sacrament of Baptism for which the whole of Lent is an active preparation. If we glance at the significant ceremonies of the Wednesday before Holy Week, on which day the 'Fourth scrutiny' summed up the ceremonies and teaching of the forty days, we find those who were being prepared for the sacrament receiving solemnly from three deacons the Gospels, the Creed and the Pater Noster. They had been instructed in the faith and the prayer of the Church, and here these life-giving symbols were handed to them formally so that when they arrived at the baptistry on Holy Saturday evening they should be already armed with the words which would take fire from the living waters—that is the mysterious paradox in our Lord's revelation to Nicodemus, to be born again of water and fire. Before they received the sacrament itself they had been

immediately prepared by the prophecies concerning the power of water to give life once the sign of the life of Christ, the living flame of the Candle, had been plunged into the font. All this is still to be found in the rite of baptism with its formal recitation of the Creed and the Pater Noster and in the revived ceremonies of the Easter Vigil. Those who are baptized or renew their baptismal vows then stand forth with the candles in their hands lit from the great, single flame of the Candle. The baptized Christian is 'illumined' by the '*Lumen Christi*', the light that is substantially the same in the purgative way, when he is purified by the waters, in the illuminative way, when he is enlightened by these same waters, and in the unitive way when the flame has merged into the one flame of heavenly life and glory.

In order to see clearly the implications of this sacrament as the foundation of the whole mystical life of the Christian it will be well to follow the general distinction of the different aspects of the sacrament—the external sign, the interior sign, and the ultimate grace effected (*Sacramentum tantum*, *Res et Sacramentum*, *Res tantum*). The exterior rite of baptism welds the natural and the supernatural together by the use of a primary natural element, and words that convey the entire mystery of Christ. Water has inevitably been regarded from primitive times as the element of purification as well as of fecundity. The peoples who lived by the sea observed the sun buried by the waters at night and rising to the new life of a new day in the morning—the fire of life rising from the waters. Those whose livelihood was derived from the rich river valleys recognized the generative power of living streams. So the ancient religions used water ritually to cleanse mother and child—with some rudimentary conception in their minds of man's defilement; they observed ablutions and lustrations in their ceremonies; they poured water from the living brook upon the altar, or formally on the fields to obtain the blessing of rain at the appointed times for their grain or cattle. This element was used probably by the Essenes for their initiation rites and St John the Baptist chose it as the most telling symbol of his message of change of heart in preparation for entry into the new kingdom of God.

To the use of this mysterious and dynamic element, then, our Lord, and following him the early Church, added a formula of words conveying the depths of the Christian mystery. The

neophyte was cleansed and regenerated in the name of the Blessed Trinity by water into which the human body of the Son of God had descended in Jordan. By this act the Blessed Trinity was to come and dwell in his heart and thus was begun a continuous life destined to reach its fulfilment in the face-to-face vision of the Blessed Trinity. When our Lord was baptized the heavens were opened, the voice of the Father was heard, and the Spirit descended so that the event was in effect the first visible revelation of the mystery of the Trinity; and cleansed and regenerated the neophyte is thus introduced into the 'family circle' of the God-head.

The symbol of the cleansing and regenerative element bathing the body of the applicant for membership in the Church, in conjunction with the words of the mystery into which he is being introduced, weld the natural with the supernatural in the new divine life which the entire man, body and soul, is now going to live. But the key to the 'mysticism' of Baptism lies in the second aspect of the sacrament, namely the interior sign, the sign which is made in the soul by the powers of the water and the Word. Baptism is not just a 'signing on' as Mr Massingham seems at one time to have imagined. In an autobiographical section of one of his books he mentions having been received into the Church as though it was a question of having his name down on the ecclesiastical books, a method of insurance. The sacrament imparts a permanent Christian character, which again is something more than a mark on the soul—an idea which sometimes seems to mean little more than having one's name down on the Register of the Church. The character imparted by baptism is a permanent, ineradicable power or faculty—the word used by the theologians is *potestas*—which is itself an effective sign or sacrament. By baptism the neophyte receives the *form* of Christ, a word which stands for the more external sense of *schema* or character and the interior form of *morphe* in the scriptures. The Christian is 'another Christ' externally as a visible member of the Body of Christ and internally as living by the life of Christ, and he is this through the permanent effect of his baptism. This 'figure' of Christ gives something of the appearance of our Lord and of his power as Word Incarnate and, by sacramentally reproducing, as it were, the great mystery of the hypostatic union, it gives authority to the phrase that the Christian is another Christ. He is another Christ

certainly if he is in a state of grace; but another Christ also even without grace, as the branch still belongs to the tree even though it is not virile through the sap; the hand to the body though paralysed; the son to the family though in disgrace. But when this figure is a living figure we are put in mind at once of the main burden of the mystical teaching of Walter Hilton who shows how the Christian is first re-formed in faith and finally re-formed 'in faith and feeling', the form of Christ having become all embracing. In *The Scale of Perfection* Hilton speaks of baptism as re-forming the soul in faith: 'As soon as [the child] is christened, it is reformed to the image of God . . . and when [the Jew or the Saracen] fall meekly to the truth in Christ and receive the baptism of water in the Holy Ghost, soothly without any more tarrying they are re-formed to the likeness of God so fully . . . that if they might as soon after baptism pass out of this world, they should flee straight to heaven without any more letting.' (Book 2, ch. 6). For Hilton this was the first and fundamental con-figuration to Christ and the Trinity; the second and higher was that in feeling as well, through the flowering of the gifts instilled by the waters of baptism. The final forming occurred on entry into heaven. But the character or image of Christ is the ground-work of the whole mystical structure of the divine life of grace. It gives the Christian the form of Christ as King because he becomes part of the Kingdom of God; it gives him the form of Christ as Priest because it introduces him to the other sacraments, gives him a share in the central priestly act of the Mass, makes him a mediator between God and man, and constitutes him an 'organum Christi', as our Lord's humanity was the 'organum divinitatis', an instrument producing supernatural effects in all his human acts, as rays from the Word made flesh. The character too is a sign of distinction, marking off the Christian from all those who are not of Christ; it is a sign of dedication, committing the Christian to all the rights and duties of a fully constituted member of the Church, a right to the other sacraments, a duty to offer the common sacrifice with his fellow Christians, a duty as well to build up the Church by deeds of virtue towards his neighbour. And so the Christian character bestowed by baptism provides the essential material for the Christian mysticism, which perfects the 'alter Christus' as a member of the Church, the body of Christ, and leads him to the heights of holiness.

Primarily this power or faculty is a passive power, or potency, making it possible for the Christian to receive the other sacraments and above all the unitive grace of the Eucharist. It makes it possible for the baptized to be united by Communion with the divine victim sacramentally immolated on the altar. A great deal of the symbolism elaborated by St Paul centres on this fact; immersed in the waters we are baptized in Christ's death, buried with him in order to rise again with him. The Christian is first given the power to become an offering, something offered, a part of the divine victim of Calvary. And here we come to the central reality, or ultimate effect of the Sacrament, for it purified the whole man of sin by this unique contact with the victim of Calvary, so much so that, as Hilton says in the quotation already given, immediately after baptism the Christian is utterly cleansed by his identification with the Passion of Christ, the source of all redemption. Much has been written in spiritual books about the dark nights of the soul and the purgative way; it should be remembered that this work of passive purification derives its effect from the passive 'power' of the baptismal character. All hardships and sufferings, all attacks from the devil are now purifying because the Christian is baptized in Christ's death and buried with him. Without the character the daily pains and anxieties and irksome affairs might pass the sufferer by or at least remain mere penalties for sin; but now the penalties become instruments of purification preparing the soul for further graces. As a member of Christ's body the Christian's wounds have become the wounds of Christ, fruitful for redemption of his own sin and also for the sins of others. Nor is this transformation of man through the new character limited to penalties and pains; in a sense it gives him the power to transform all the circumstances of his daily life into Christian things. He is inevitably subject to a host of external circumstances which otherwise are mere necessities; the need to eat and sleep, the need to be subject to authority in his social life, the need to work for his livelihood. All these necessities which press in upon him now, as a member of Christ's body, he accepts and transforms into sources of grace.

The virtue which is most closely associated with this aspect of baptism is the theological virtue of hope; for now that he has received this permanent faculty of being a Christian, marked in this way by the Passion, the Christian's confidence in God's love

and mercy soars to the full height of the theological virtue. It is said of Martin Luther that when tempted strongly to despair he took his pen and wrote '*Baptizatus sum*', relying for victory on the fact that as baptized he was a member of the victorious Christ. The popular conception of the Lutheran idea of faith or trust as a sort of infallible title to salvation might lead some to suspect this gesture as an act of presumption. But in itself it was the true attitude towards the mercy of God revealed through the sacrament of baptism and continued by the supernatural character. Bearing the marks of Christ crucified the Christian has this supreme confidence in the redemption, and from this hope springs his whole life of prayer. As a child of God he can confidently recite the 'Our Father' from which he can rise to the highest forms of contemplation.

But this permanent sacrament which remains for ever in the soul of the Christian has its active as well as its passive side. For example, the baptized Christian has an active role in the sacrament of Matrimony, each partner actively employing his and her baptismal character in the administration of that sacrament. And in a less formal manner baptism gives the right and the power to take part actively in the liturgy of the Church and above all in the Mass. Not only is the Christian something offered, a part of the Victim of Calvary; he is also an offerer from the first moment of the day when he offers all that is about to take place in his waking hours to the last, when he returns or offers thanks for the loving protection of God's Providence throughout the day. And all this is summed up and made part of the priestly offering of Christ on the Cross through the Christian's active part in the Eucharistic sacrifice, 'the greatest possible work of contemplation'. This is the foundation of the unity of the Christian life in Christ, a unity of actions centred in one act; a unity which begins through baptism making all one's actions Christian, and ends in the perfection of unity in heaven. The groundwork of the unitive way as with all the other aspects of the Christian life is to be found in the effects of baptism.

For the Passion, with its emphasis on suffering and passivity, must always be understood in terms of the Resurrection with its message of joy in the fully active life of grace. We are baptized in Christ's death in order to rise again with him to the new life. We have 'put on' Christ and so become, by this incorporation

into Christ, the new man. Already in baptism the Christian receives the presence of our Lord, to be perfected and concluded by the sacrament of the Eucharist. The close link between these two sacraments which begin and complete the new life is clearly described by St Thomas: 'Baptism is the source (*principium*) of the spiritual life and the door of the sacraments'. The Eucharist is rather 'the consummation of the spiritual life' and the 'end of all the sacraments'. . . . Through baptism a man is directed (*ordinatur*) to the Eucharist. And therefore from the fact that children are baptized they are directed by the Church to the Eucharist. And just as they believe from the faith of the Church, so also they desire the Eucharist from the intention of the Church, and consequently they receive the 'reality' of the Eucharist. (III, 73, 3). Thus already by baptism the Christian receives the first stages of the unity in the body of Christ which is perfected by Communion. Since the ultimate grace of Holy Communion is the act of love or, in other words, the perfection of the unity of the mystical body we can see that the new life of adopted sons of God or incorporation into Christ, which is achieved by baptism, contains the initial grace of loving union with our Lord in charity. This eucharistic grace of actual love and union is in baptism as the fruit is in the flower.

Already, then, we may find in baptism the roots of mysticism and contemplation in the theological virtues of hope and charity which are infused by it and which constitute the contemplative life. But the third theological virtue, faith, is equally brought into activity by the living waters. The new life thus inaugurated is a human life and therefore a life that springs from the mind and the will. The effect of baptism then is a renewal or regeneration of the mind and of the will. St Thomas shows that it is through incorporation into the mystical body that the baptized are in particular 'illuminated'. 'Just as', he says, 'feeling and movement are derived from the natural head to the members of the body; so from the spiritual head, which is Christ, the members receive his spiritual feelings which consist in the knowledge of the truth, and spiritual movement which comes from the instinct of grace. Hence St John says, "We saw him full of grace and truth; and of his fullness we have all received." It follows then that the baptized are illumined by Christ in the knowledge of the truth and are made fruitful by him in the fecundity of good works through the

infusion of graces' (III, 69, 5). Baptism is the sacrament of faith introducing the catechumen into the society of the faithful, and by establishing him in the faith the sacrament gives him the seeds of the intellectual gifts of wisdom and understanding. His eyes are opened to a new vision, seeing, perhaps, at first men as trees walking, but as he develops the graces and virtue infused by the sacred waters he sees more and more clearly into the deep mysteries of the faith. The Spirit is brooding all the time over these baptismal waters bringing forth a new intellectual life and a new movement of the supernatural virtues. The Spirit descended upon our Lord as he stood in the waters of Jordan and this power of the Spirit has always vivified the new Christian leading him on to the flowering of his faith through the gifts.

In short, all the highest graces of the spiritual life, the genuine mystical experiences of the Christian, the perfection of his virtues both of mind and will in holiness, all is to be found in the seed sown by the reception of the sacrament of baptism. It may be objected that this leaves an artificial and absolute line between the baptized and the non-baptized. But of course baptism by desire which embraces such a vast array of men and women brings these initial mystical graces also. Yet it is never quite the same, never quite so sure, never quite so integral and complete. 'The catechumen', says St Thomas again, 'if he is an adult and has baptism by desire, has already obtained the effects of baptism as regards cleansing from sin and the reception of grace which is the effect proper to God; but when he actually receives baptism he obtains more fully certain sacramental effects, because he receives the character and the remission of the whole penalty due to sin . . .' (Quodlibet, 4, 10). In other words the permanence of baptism remaining always with him, constituting him once and for always a Christian person with all such a person's rights, duties and privileges, makes the development of mystical life more sure and integral. But especially the sacrament shows the necessity of true mysticism being formed within the mystical life of the whole Church, which is the mystical Body of Christ. The lives and teachings of the mystics sometimes appear to be highly individualistic. They live solitary in their anchorhold, cut off as far as may be from their fellow men. They teach those who would follow them to withdraw from all creatures in order to be concerned with God alone. But the background of their teaching is always the sacra-

ments and the life of the Church. They have been baptized into the Church, become members of the mystical body and their life is essentially social, derived from their membership. Each gift of grace they receive, however noble, is bestowed on them not as isolated individuals, separate and entirely distinct; it is given to them because they are by baptism incorporated into Christ; it is a mission, a sending forth of power and holiness to the Word made flesh, to the Son within the Trinitarian life. The mystic through his baptismal character not only has the right to the highest graces of union, but also the duties of a true citizen of the Kingdom of God. He has duties to God in a social life, duties to the other members of the body and to those who should be members.

The unity of the mystical life, then, is derived from the sacrament of baptism. And it is a unity which is horizontal as well as perpendicular. That is to say, it unites the whole spiritual life from its inception to its fullness in the heights of mysticism and eventually in its perfection in the vision of the Trinity in heaven. This grounding in the sacramental character prevents the esotericism into which the aspirants to mysticism so easily fall. And secondly it takes the 'mystic' out of himself and gives him not only to God but also to the Church. Horizontally the mystic is given to the whole world however remote he may seem, because he is baptized into the Church and his graces are Christian and social graces as well as mystical. 'Christ also loved the Church and delivered himself up for it; that he might sanctify it, cleansing it by the laver of water in the word of life; that he might present it to himself a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish' (Eph. 5).



# THE LITURGY OF THE SYNAGOGUE AND THE CHRISTIAN LITURGY<sup>1</sup>

IRENAEUS DALMAIS, O.P.

**T**HIS question covers a wide, largely unexplored field. It will not be easy to draw parallels before we know what to choose as a type for comparison in the synagogal liturgy on the one hand, and in the wealth of Christian liturgies on the other. Jewish prayers comprise not only those which were codified and organized as such and may be termed liturgy proper, but also an abundance of another type of prayer which is not official, but where we may yet find traces of the early Jewish prayer. In the Christian liturgy the best witness will not be the Roman, but some of the Eastern rites, especially the Coptic and Syriac.

Again similarities with the synagogal prayer will be found more easily in the Divine Office than in the Mass. Although we know very little about the origins of the breviary and how it was constituted, one notices a convergence of private and monastic piety, as well as liturgical tradition, part of the latter going back to the Synagogue.

How far back can we go? The oldest Jewish prayer-book dates back to the 9th century A.D. Our knowledge of the Christian office, on the other hand, cannot be traced back further than the 8th century, and even at this time, there was between Church and Synagogue a long-standing relationship of mutual ignorance, if not of downright hostility.

Nevertheless if we turn to older sources, for instance, to the MISHNA<sup>2</sup> itself, (2nd and 3rd century), we shall be able to discuss the structure of the liturgy, the elements of the service and the celebration of the Eucharist.

## I. *The Arrangement of the Liturgy*

We know from the Mishna that since the 1st century A.D. both the morning and evening service in the Synagogue had two essential parts. The first is the SHEMA, or solemn attestation of the faith of Israel in One God, the other the TEPHILLAH or prayer *par*

<sup>1</sup> Adapted and abridged from a talk given at Notre Dame de Sion, Paris, July 12th, 1956.

<sup>2</sup> The Mishna is part of the Talmud.

excellence formed by the eighteen benedictions. There were introductory prayers, besides, which included a commemoration of the sacrifice of Abraham, read from Genesis XVIII, followed by commentaries and very beautiful prayers. In place of the sacrifices in the Temple, which could no longer be performed, the faithful were requested to offer more spiritual sacrifices, 'agreeable to the Lord'. Some of these prayers were very beautiful, especially the one reminiscent of our Preface, ending with the solemn acclamation: 'Holy, holy, holy is the Eternal Zebaoth, all the earth is full of His Majesty'. It is worth notice that the Christian liturgy contains this same triple Sanctus. *We* say, however, '*Heaven* and earth are full of his glory', meaning, as a commentator has brought out, that, since the coming of Christ, Heaven and earth have been reconciled in a common homage to God.

We give at this point a few extracts from the liturgy of the synagogue.<sup>3</sup>

*From the Morning Service: Preliminaries (I Chronicles xxix. 10-13)*  
 . . . 10. And David blessed the Lord in the presence of all the congregation: and David said, Blessed art thou, O Lord; the God of Israel our father, from everlasting to everlasting. 11. Thine, O Lord is the greatness, and the power and the glory and the victory and the majesty: for all that is in the heaven and in the earth is thine; thine, O Lord, is the kingdom, and the supremacy, as head over all. 12. Riches and honour come of thee, and thou rulest over all; and in thine hand are might and power; and in thine hand it is to make great, and to give strength unto all. 13. Now, therefore, our God we give thanks unto thee, and praise thy glorious Name.

(Nehemiah ix. 6)

6. Thou art the Lord, even thou alone; thou hast made the heavens, the heaven of heavens, and all their host, the earth and all things that are thereon, the seas and all that is in them, and thou givest life to them all; and the host of heaven worship thee.

*Here follows the evocation of the whole mystery of Salvation:*

7. Thou art the Lord the God, who didst choose Abram and broughtest him forth out of Ur of the Chaldees, and gavest him the name of Abraham: and foundest his heart faithful before thee

<sup>3</sup> These extracts are from the authorized Daily Prayer Book of the United Hebrew Congregations, edited by Dr J. H. Hertz. Shapiro Vallentine and Co., London, 1955.

And thou madest a covenant with him to give the land of the Canaanite, the Hittite, the Amorite, and the Perizzite, and the Jebusite, and the Gergashite, even to give it unto his seed, and hast performed thy words; for thou art righteous. 9. And thou sawest the affliction of our fathers in Egypt, and hearest their cry by the Red Sea; 10. and shewedst signs and wonders upon Pharaoh, and on all his servants, and on all the people of his land; for thou knewest that they dealt arrogantly against them; and didst make thee a name, as it is this day. 11. And thou didst divide the sea before them, so that they went through the midst of the sea on the dry land; and their pursuers thou didst cast into the depths, as a stone into the mighty waters.

(Exodus xiv. 30-xv, 18)

Thus the Lord saved Israel that day out of the hand of the Egyptians; and Israel saw the great power which the Lord put forth against the Egyptians, and the people revered the Lord: and they believed in the Lord and in Moses his servant.

*Here the great canticle of the Exodus is sung:*

I will sing unto the Lord for he hath been highly exalted: the horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea. 2. The Lord is my strength and song, and he is become my salvation; this is my God and I will glorify him; my father's God, and I will exalt him. 3. The Lord is a man of war: the Lord is his Name. 4. Pharaoh's chariots and his host hath he cast into the sea: and his chosen captains are sunk in the Red Sea. 5. The floods cover them: they went down into the depths like a stone. 6. Thy right hand, O Lord, is glorious in Power, thy right hand, O Lord, dasheth in pieces the enemy. 7. And in the greatness of thy majesty thou overthrewest them that rise up against thee: thou sendest forth thy wrath, it consumeth them as stubble. 8. And with the blast of thy nostrils the waters were piled up, the streams stood upright as an heap; the floods were congealed in the heart of the sea. 9. The enemy said, I will pursue, I will overtake, I will divide the spoil: my desire shall be satisfied upon them; I will draw my sword, my hand shall destroy them; thou didst blow with the wind, the sea covered them: they sank as lead in the mighty waters. 11. Who is like unto thee, glorious in holiness, revered in praises, doing marvels? 12. Thou stretchest out thy right hand, the earth swallowed them. 13. Thou in thy loving kindness leadest the people whom thou hast redeemed; thou guidest them in

thy strength to thy holy habitation. 14. The peoples have heard it; they tremble: pangs have taken hold of the inhabitants of Philistia. 15. Then were the dukes of Edom confounded; the mighty men of Moab, trembling taketh hold of them: all the inhabitants of Canaan are melted away. 16. Terror and dread fall upon them: by the greatness of thine arm they are as still as a stone; till thy people pass over, O Lord, till the people pass over that thou hast acquired. 17. Thou wilt bring them in, and plant them in the mountain of thine inheritance, the place, O Lord, which thou hast made for thee to dwell in, the sanctuary, O Lord, which thy hands have established. 18. The Lord shall reign for ever and ever. **THE LORD SHALL REIGN FOR EVER AND EVER.**

(*Psalm 22, 29*)

For the kingdom is the Lord's: and he is ruler over the nations.

(*Obadiah I, 21*)

And saviours shall come up on mount Zion to judge the mount of Esau; and the kingdom shall be the Lord's.

(*Zachariah, 14, 9*)

**AND THE LORD SHALL BE KING OVER ALL THE EARTH: IN THAT DAY SHALL THE LORD BE ONE AND HIS NAME ONE.** As it is said in the Law:

**HEAR, O ISRAEL, THE LORD IS OUR GOD, THE LORD IS ONE.**

*Then comes a long series of formulae culminating in the TRISAGION*

The name of the Divine King, the great, mighty and dreaded One, holy is he; and they all take upon themselves the yoke of the kingdom of heaven one from the other, and give leave one unto the other to declare the holiness of their Creator: in tranquil joy of spirit, with pure speech and holy melody they all respond in unison, and exclaim with awe:

(*Isaiah 6, 3*)

**HOLY, HOLY, HOLY IS THE LORD OF HOSTS: THE WHOLE EARTH IS FULL OF HIS GLORY.**

In spite of these parallels, there will be found more differences than similarities between the arrangement of the two services. The first Christians were invited to pray three times a day, when they would recite the Our Father, a simpler form of prayer than the long benedictions of the Synagogue. Later the first composers of monastic rules organized a lengthier worship. Although they used the psalms, they did so quite independently of Jewish custom. One might say that they were inspired rather by their

private Scripture-reading, which every pious Jew was supposed to do, and which, as we have mentioned before, was not in the codified liturgy. Thus it is apparent that the arrangement of our liturgy being largely derived from private rather than public Jewish prayer, has very little outward resemblance to the Jewish liturgy (i.e. public prayer).

## II. *Elements borrowed from the Jewish liturgy*

There is more to be said about what the Church borrowed from the Synagogue, whether she inserted it in her liturgy without any modification, or whether she assimilated it so as to bring out its full meaning in relation to the New Revelation.

1. The first element is, of course, *Scripture* itself. From the beginning the Word of God was read in Christian assemblies and in this the Church is the heir of the Synagogue. The more conservative Oriental Churches, the Coptic and Syriac, still give first place to readings from the Torah or Pentateuch. Next comes a passage from the prophets, then three texts from the New Testament: (a) Acts or Catholic Epistles, (b) St Paul, (c) the Gospel. The Roman liturgy relegated the Old Testament readings to the Vigil or Night Office and reduced the texts from the New Testament to two only (our present Epistle and Gospel). There is one exception in the Roman rite, the liturgies for the Ember-weeks. These were composed at a time when there was a renewed interest in the usages and even in the precepts of the Old Law. There was also, at this time, a tendency to make use of the wealth of the Old Law liturgy. Of the four Emberweeks throughout the year, that of September furnishes us with the closest resemblance to its Old Law ancestor. (The Emberweeks of June and December are more 'New Law', since the former refers back to Pentecost and the latter looks ahead to Christmas. The Spring Emberweek liturgy was a later addition.) In our September Emberweek we use the beautiful liturgy of the first month of the Jewish year (when they celebrated the day of Atonement and the Feast of Tabernacles). The Oriental Church shows a quite independent parallelism in its September liturgy, for the feasts of the Dedication of the Holy Sepulchre and the Finding of the Holy Cross.

(2) *The Psalmody*. The Church inherited the psalms from the Synagogue and gives them a very important place. However, as

has been already shown, the way the Church has arranged these has little to do with the old Synagogue arrangement.

(3) *The Amen.* This the Church has taken over directly from the Synagogue. Many of us do not say it as solemnly as we should. It is a Hebrew word, meaning: True. In the Synagogue the word is still used as containing, in itself, a whole profession of faith. For this reason it was introduced into the Christian Liturgy, enriched now by the solemn affirmation of our Lord who said: 'I am the Amen, the Truth' (Apoc. III, 14).

(4) *Miscellaneous Elements.* Besides those elements which the Church has borrowed directly from the Synagogue, there is an element as well of certain prayers and formulae, some of which the Jews learnt at home. These have also contributed to Christian prayers.

We said, at the beginning, that the two fundamental elements of the synagogal liturgy were the **SHEMA** or profession of faith in the Oneness of God and the **TEPHILLAH**, the prayer *par excellence* of the 18 benedictions. The Shema itself is not used, as such, in our liturgy, but with the surrounding psalms, it did become an element of the Eucharistic prayers, namely the **ANAPHORAE**.<sup>1</sup> In the Syriac rite, particularly, we can see the resemblance of the Anaphora to the Jewish prayer ending in the triple Sanctus. The Synagogue makes of this an acclamation of the Divine Name, of the Majesty and the Oneness of God, while the Church proclaims it in honour of the Unity in Trinity. The Tephillah has no exact parallel in the Christian liturgy, but it is curious to note that the substance of the old formulae (which developed into the 18 benedictions) was brought out by Jesus himself in the 'Our Father'. The rapprochement has been made several times and the seven demands of the Our Father put in two columns with the essential of the eighteen blessings for comparison. Thus the first Christians recited the Our Father, and the monks later used it as a conclusion to their office.

In the Christian Eucharistic Liturgy the Anaphora<sup>2</sup> also recalls the Tephillah, as it introduces the Lord's Prayer in all the Christian

<sup>1</sup> Anaphora means 'offering'. In the Roman Liturgy it is one long prayer beginning at the dialogue of the Preface and going with interruptions (for the mementos) up to the doxology preceding the Pater Noster.

<sup>2</sup> We have just seen that it is an heir to the Shema, except that it substitutes the sacramental Presence of the Word of God, incarnate in the Person of Christ, for the mysterious presence of God (the Shekinah) transmitted to Israel.

liturgies. In some Eastern rites, the AMEN is solemnly sung after each demand of the Pater Noster. In the Roman liturgy, however, it is only said (or sung) at the conclusion. In all these cases it is the Christian transposition of a great prayer of Israel which concludes our liturgy.

### III. *The Jewish Sources of the Eucharist*

A few months ago, a French television programme gave as an introduction to our Sunday liturgy a short telecast of the Jewish KIDDUSH.<sup>1</sup> Some Jewish friends of the organiser had consented to the taking and televising of this rite in their family. Many Catholics were deeply moved on seeing this ritual and said they now could far better understand the deep human sense of the Eucharist which our hieratic celebration tends sometimes to put in the background. This was an opportunity to introduce them to a better knowledge of the Eucharistic rite in its primitive shape: 'The first Mass at the Last Supper'. Once more we have an instance of extra synagogal prayers. The Kiddush of the Sabbath, as well as the more solemn Kiddush of the Pasch, is the remnant of a rite which was fully developed by the beginning of the Christian era, when groups of pious Jews used to meet on the eve of the Sabbath to celebrate a community meal. These rites were kept by the first Christians, especially the blessing of the cup, which is in three parts:

(a) The benediction of the Name of God, which has evolved into our Preface. As far back as the 3rd century this blessing was concluded by the Trisagion or triple 'Sanctus' which is taken from the synagogal liturgy, as has been said above.

(b) The benediction or blessing of the Work of God for His People, God being the Liberator and Redeemer of Israel, especially from the slavery of Egypt. This part is preserved in its entirety in the Byzantine rite as well as in the Syriac and Copt. In the Roman Rite, the essential is preserved, viz., the narrative of the Institution of the Eucharist followed by the anamnesis<sup>2</sup> recalling the work of salvation.

(c) The third part of the benediction is the *Prayer for Israel*: that Israel, now scattered, may be reassembled from the four corners

<sup>1</sup> Kiddush is the Jewish family meal on the eve of the Sabbath.

<sup>2</sup> Anamnesis is the prayer 'Unde et memores' which comes directly after the elevation of the Chalice.

of the earth. This used to be the blessing for the land, *Eretz Israel*, as the blessing of the people cannot be separated from the blessing of the land. Our liturgy gives these a Christian significance. But some of the oldest liturgies, the Egyptian for instance, have a prayer for the reassembling of the People of God. They use the image of bread, uniting all the grains of corn harvested in many different lands, and the image there is a prayer that those who partake of a 'sacramental meal' may really become the People of God. We know that we do become the People of God by receiving the Spirit which forms the Body of Christ, so that we may be filled with the Spirit of God. In the oriental rite of Jerusalem in the 4th century, there is an invocation of the Holy Spirit over the Bread and Wine in order that these may become the Body and Blood of Christ. Both Churches, East and West, keep the same traditional prayer of Israel for the People and the Land.

And this is how the heritage of the Synagogue in its richest elements was taken up, assimilated and transposed by the Christian liturgy.

A short anecdote to conclude: Last year I was in Israel on Sunday, August 7th. It was the 9th Sunday after Pentecost, and we read that morning at Mass the passage of the Gospel where our Lord announces the destruction of the Temple. In the small room in the Kibbutz where we celebrated our liturgy, I explained to the 'Rovers' this episode and its meaning, adding that this year there was a very happy coincidence of the calendar so that this 1st Sunday in August, the 9th after Pentecost, was, day for day, the anniversary of the destruction of the Temple. In the afternoon we passed the Petah Tikvah Synagogue where we saw a few old men and a handful of children. The 'Haver' of the Kibbutz told us that that day religious Jews celebrated the anniversary of the destruction of the Temple. I replied that we had done the same that morning, when we read the passage from the Gospel in which Jesus foretold this destruction. 'What?' he exclaimed, 'Are you, Christians, interested in an anniversary so specifically Jewish?' — 'Of course', I said, 'we take an interest in it because both anniversaries of the destruction of the Temple are essential stages of the history of the People of God. They are two dates referring to the mystery of salvation.' — 'Oh', he said, 'of course, you'll always refer to this. In the history of Israel you always pretend to see things which are not of historical interest at all.'

It is, of course, a fact that events commemorated in our liturgy have a meaning beyond the purely historical interpretation. How few Christians know that this passage of the Gospel was selected for a Sunday which oscillates roughly between the end of July and the beginning of August, and that in the year 595 (in which the ancestor of our present Missal was composed by the Pope St Gregory) as well as in 1954, this 9th Sunday after Pentecost coincided with the first Sunday in August and therefore with the anniversary of the destruction of the Temple? This can only mean that such a choice was made purposely.

If we studied attentively first our Roman liturgy which is familiar to us, then other Christian liturgies, especially the Coptic and Syriac which remain much nearer to the Aramaean and Synagogal rites, we could, no doubt, discover more and more what a wealth of prayer we have in common with the Synagogue.



## THREE SHORT HOMILIES OF ST JOHN CHRYSOSTOM

TRANSLATED BY J. F. T. PRINCE

*Of being for nothing solicitous.*

Christ teacheth that we should work for ourselves and, going without much, become content with little. Thus for Himself, He cut down even of necessities, using no beast to bear Him, but walking such distances that He became weary with His journey. Wherefore, said He: 'The foxes have holes and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man hath not where to lay His head:' and of His days and nights, too, He spent most on the mountains and in the deserts. And of Him did David foretell: 'He shall drink of the brook in the way.' So then at the Well of Sychar doth John the Evangelist shew the Lord to be careless of food, treating the matter as of little import; and thus were the disciples taught, taking with them no provisions for the road. Different indeed from us, who rising from our beds are soon calling for provisions, and with earnestness, concerning ourselves with cooks and caterers. Before, then, we turn to the ordering of

our temporal accompts, let our observance be concerned with the life of the spirit that we may learn without confusion to prefer the lasting to the trivial and transitory. *Homily XXI on St John.*

*Of giving place to violence.*

My beloved, when it hurts not our virtue, we must render not sharpness with sharpness nor contend with the violent, giving place to their evil counsel. For know you that when darts strike upon a hard, unyielding surface, they too often rebound with a violence equal to that with which they are thrown. Yet when he that casteth the dart is met with nothing, soon he becometh weak and careth not to continue. So must we be toward the insolent: yielding and giving ground that comfortably we may abate their madness. Wherefore did Christ, knowing that the Pharisees had heard that Jesus made and baptised more disciples than John, go into Galilee to quench their envious contention, and by retiring so soften their wrath. And when, yet again, He departed into Galilee, He came not to the same place; for He went not again to Cana, but to the other side of the Sea. *Homily XLII on St John.*

*Of forgiving injury and debt.*

When therefore the Lord had spoken of the ancient law 'an eye for an eye', He certified that it is not our brother who has done us so great an injury, but the Demon. And he enjoined thus His hearers; 'But I say unto you that he resist not the Evil one', meaning that it is from the prompting of the Devil that men do evil things; so did the Lord take away our anger for the aggressor by transferring the blame to Satan. Let us, moreover, think not of the passing pleasure that comes from the exacting of the penalty and debt, but of that great loss which we must bear hereafter for our hardness. Let us not injure ourselves as to that which endureth forever; forgiving, rather, those who should give accompt to us of injury and debt. Thus shall we possess ourselves of the Eternal Blessing, by the grace and charity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, to Whom be all glory and power, now and forever. Amen. *Homilies XVIII and XV on St Matthew.*



## POINT OF VIEW

### ANGELIC COMFORT FOR CONVERTS

Frequently, there is a feature in conversions to the Catholic Church from other forms of Christianity which causes perplexity to those around the convert and sometimes excites their contempt; which not infrequently perplexes and almost annoys the convert himself (and I speak from a personal experience which, though belonging to a distant past, is so intimate that I am obliged here and now to seek refuge in anonymity)—a feature, however, which seems to be wonderfully explained by the theology of St Thomas (though I confess to not having discovered this till recently).

In the *Summa* 2-2, Q. VI, the Saint discusses the *cause* of faith, and he concludes that though, of course, some kind of ‘preaching’ and some kind of ‘evidence’ is required for the production of faith, yet the true and real cause of faith is a *divine interior instinct which urges consent*. The Holy Doctor takes the instance of two men who hear the same preaching or witness with their eyes the same miracle, and then one believes and the other does not; but he says expressly that this particular instance is only illustrative, and so we can safely apply his principles to modern converts from fragmentary to integral Christianity.

Here, then, is the situation. Two Anglican clergymen read the same books; are familiar with the same arguments for and against conversion to ‘Rome’; have similar experiences in their Anglican ministry and so forth;—and yet one remains where he is, while the other takes the great and glorious step. Why? Those who believe in the one, holy, catholic and Roman Church, and follow the teaching of the Angelic Doctor, have a plain answer: because one of the two clergymen is by an inward instinct urged to become a convert, and the other is not. This, I say, explains perfectly why the convert so often experiences a strange unwillingness to speak of what is going on in his mind. He feels instinctively that reasons which powerfully move him, if put to others will seem weak and ineffective and may even be dubbed trite. He may perhaps feel a frantic desire to discover other and more conclusive reasons, and be worried because he cannot. Vain quest!—and *nihil ad rem*.

But there is something deeper still. Though scarcely, perhaps, realizing it himself, the convertend (if I may be allowed such a word) is in possession of a sacred secret which he must not betray: he is being personally led by God. So St Thomas.

Much more, Mr Editor, could be said on this subject, but I would not trespass on your space. I venture to think, however, that this communication belongs to the *LIFE OF THE SPIRIT* and I trust that it is something more and better than attempted self-justification.—IDIOTES

## EXTRACTS

LUMIÈRE ET VIE (Saint Alban-Leysse; Savoie; 250 francs a copy) devotes its twenty-seventh issue to 'Baptism in the New Testament'. The major part of its 144 pages is taken up by Père Duplacy's article on Salvation by Faith and Baptism in the New Testament. His introductory remarks show the immediate relevance of the question for our own times.

On May 7th, 1943 . . . Karl Barth gave a lecture on: The doctrine of the Church on Baptism. This lecture had considerable repercussions in Protestant circles. In opposition to the general tradition of the reformed Churches, the eminent theologian rejected the custom of child baptism in the name of Holy Writ. Baptism being for the New Testament the sacrament of faith, the Church ought not to baptize human beings incapable of having faith. Essays and controversies were multiplied in the heart of Protestantism; the stir aroused by this vigorous assertion has not yet died down.

In Catholic circles, from a different angle, the problem of the relation between baptism and faith is also an actual question. Enriched by her experience of the world, the Church has condensed in the Code of Canon Law the essentials of her rules concerning the baptism of children. But pastoral experience in dechristianized or worldly circles such as that of the Finally children has posed the question of baptism and faith in a special manner for christian opinion. From both sides theology is invited to take up once more the examination of a problem which is certainly not unknown but which has never before been treated fundamentally.

The author considers tentatively the main texts in the New Testament and he is followed by Père Giblet on baptism as the sacrament of incorporation into the Church, and Père Tremel, O.P., on incorporation into Christ.

LA VIE SPIRITUELLE for August-September also contains a baptismal article. Père Bonduelle, O.P., this time is concerned with the name given at baptism. Is one obliged to give the name of a saint to the newly baptized? The Ritual demands a 'christian name' and this appears to mean the name of 'a saint'. But 'saint' is not to be taken in its strict sense of an officially canonized person. For, as Père Bonduelle points out, the Roman Martyrology contains the names of many who were not even regarded as particularly holy but the anniversary of whose death was thought to be important. And the Martyrology appears to be the mine for Christian names. Incidentally he has some trenchant remarks about the possible reform of the Martyrology.

Some speak of a revision of the liturgical martyrology. We do not complain of that. But we think it rather a tall order! What will be the principles of the undertaking? Will it only attempt to correct the innumerable errors that the better historians have pointed out? Or will it opt for a reconsideration of the principles by which the venerable lists have been established?

**SURSUM CORDA**, the Australian review for priests and religious, is a useful and 'down to earth' spiritual journal. In the July issue Fr Herring, C.P., deals with the question of the gifts and mental prayer for the priests and religious who by their very mission are destined to be overwhelmed by cares and weariness.

Priests and religious find their time for formal prayer lessened because the number requiring their ministrations have increased, as also have their needs. Even when free to attend to prayer, spiritual reading, conferences and such like, frequently neither priest nor religious is in 'the mood' for these things. Their most earnest efforts at meditation and mental prayer are hindered by a tired mind and a fatigued body. Even morning prayer and morning Mass become almost a signal to continue one's sleep.

The problem is a common one to almost all clergy and religious. And the first answer given by Fr Herring is basic.

It is to this life of activity in the apostolate that we are called. We are *called by God*. God has chosen our work for us.

And the practical answer is to be found in the gifts of the Holy Ghost who comes to strengthen our Faith and our Charity in the work of the apostolate to the degree to which the demands of the divinely appointed work require.



## BOOK REVIEW SUPPLEMENT

**THE EUCHARIST AND THE CONFESSORIAL.** By F. D. Joret, O.P. (Blackfriars; 12s. 6d.).

The governing idea of this book is that grace in one form or another flows through our lives and we shall best understand the sacraments by first understanding the manner of God's communion with his creation. Therefore the first chapter is entitled The Sacrament of God. 'The gift of God is himself, and it is grace which flows from him into our soul.' Father Joret is blunt and direct and this is most welcome: 'We must beware of underrating these symbolic utterances on the plea that they are just figures of speech. They are the actual expressions our Saviour

used to reveal the truth to us and to bring it home.' In this way he makes very sure at the outset that the notion of grace is clear to his readers. Then after considering the institution of the sacraments, their power and the part we must play in receiving them, he comes to the main work of the book which is to consider in some detail (150 pages as against 30 or so of introduction) the two 'routine' or daily sacraments of Penance and Holy Eucharist. True, he has nothing new to say, but it is the manner of saying which is valuable. He writes colourfully with numerous illustrations from contemporary life, vivid images and metaphors, but all the time the fundamental principles of the Church's teaching on the sacraments are being driven home. The use of the Scriptures, the Fathers of the Church and the saints and mystics is flexible and thoroughly well adapted to its purpose, which is to enlighten the mind. Nor does learning bear down heavily on the work. Frequently one is startled to find that here is nothing more than St Thomas' plain teaching; but it is so competently and neatly applied to our practical problems that we cannot believe it is so old. A neat explanation of *reviviscentia* freshens the mind, and simple practical instructions about making a good communion or preventing frequent confessions going stale make this an admirable book for routine spiritual reading, and for priests who want to pass on the advice to others.

THE WINDOW IN THE WALL. By Ronald Knox. (Burns & Oates; 15s.)

On the back of the dust-cover of this book are to be found two arresting titles, *In Soft Garments*, *The Hidden Stream*. The greatness, and it is true greatness, of Monsignor Knox's preaching shows itself in his power to command our attention with the first words he utters. And he never loses that command; I found myself forcibly carried along in reading these sermons on the Holy Eucharist delivered annually over the last twenty years at Corpus Christi, Maiden Lane. But this command springs from no brittle urbanity; true, Mgr Knox has all the superficial virtues, but style always serves matter. The first sermon which gives the title to the book is an excellent example. Mgr Knox takes the text from the Canticle of Canticles, 'And now he is standing on the other side of this very wall; now he is looking through each window in turn, peering through every chink. I can hear my true love calling to me, Rise up, rise up quickly, dear heart, so gentle, so beautiful, rise up and come with me.' At first he appears merely to be setting the text in its context, until with the art of a great preacher he plunges us right into the middle of the situation with the remark, 'that voice at the window brings to my own mind a fancy which I have often had . . . that the glittering Disc of whiteness which we see occupying that round opening [in the monstrance] is not reflecting the light of the

candles in front of it but is penetrated with a light of its own, a light not of this world, shining through it from behind, as if through a window....' He might well have stopped there and drawn some moral lesson, but no, the 'strong meat' of theology is yet to come. The window is in a wall, the 'wall of our corrupt nature . . . and through that wall the Incarnation and the Passion of Jesus Christ have made a great window . . . made a breach in our citadel, let light into our prison'. Yet again this is not a thing that happened once and was done with, it is for all eternity, and we have a pledge of that in the Eucharist where 'In this mystery of Transubstantiation, he has broken into the very heart of nature', and so the wall of partition is no longer a wall of partition. What a superb and masterly way of bringing home the truth that Christ's Incarnation is the raising and transformation of our human nature here and now for us. There we have an example of Mgr Knox's power to command and at the same time his suavity of style; they spring together from a firm grasp of the truths of religion and a severe discipline of thought. But there is yet one more quality which sweetens everything: for all that his mind has been devoted to learning all his life, his eyes have never been taken off his fellow men, and we can find reflected in them love and humility. So in the end every extended metaphor, every image, every scrap of scholarship and learning is drawn to some direct, practical and gentle conclusion. 'I wonder, is that why some of us are so frightened of Holy Communion, because we still cling to the world of sense?' 'When you pray for the Pope's intentions at Mass, take your stand beside him in imagination, the man on whom we Christians, millions of us, have laid the burden of our common solicitudes.' One cannot take up, still less put down, this book without very great gratitude to Monsignor Knox for making the truths of our faith real and bringing them home to us firmly and yet tenderly. This is work that will last and stand beside Cardinal Newman and will be read again and again.

GERARD MEATH, O.P.

THE SACRAMENTS IN THE CHRISTIAN LIFE. By M. M. Philipon, O.P.  
Translated by J. A. Otto. (Sands; 16s.)

Readers who are used to this kind of book will like it. It gives an adequate theology of the sacraments, 'and provides as well many passages suitable for meditation': this from the dust-cover. The theology will be swallowed because it is given in familiar abstract terms, but it will remain undigested because the author himself has never succeeded in digesting it; he has only made it palatable with a wrapping of devotional platitude (probably less wearisome in French). Genuine theology implies personally understanding the content of

revelation within the framework provided by the Church's development of it, but in this book scripture is simply made use of to illustrate developed doctrine. The Marian passages which produced adverse comment and a correspondence in *The Times Literary Supplement* are fairly typical. The reviewer was wrong to doubt their orthodoxy, and exaggerated their importance in relation to the rest of the book, but had any real theological justification for them been given his remarks would not have been made. We shall never have a theologically educated laity as long as mediocre books continue to be put out. A. M. Roguet's book on the sacraments a year or two ago was short, clear, and written with theological insight. A pity that bad money tends to drive out good.

LAURENCE BRIGHT, O.P.

LOVE OF OUR NEIGHBOUR. A Symposium. (Blackfriars; 12s. 6d.)

This book was published two years ago in French by Les Editions du Cerf under the title of *L'Amour du Prochain*. In the words of the Editor Père Plé it is offered not as a short theological treatise on love of one's neighbour, but to help prepare the way for such a thing. The general principles on which the present work is based are among the central data of our faith: God is love, he loves us, and he asks us to love him; to love God is to love our neighbour, to love our neighbour is to love God. The brilliant little essay in the third section on the *Divine Dialectic* shows how far removed from the Hegelian dialectic of master and slave is christian love of God and neighbour. The three essays in the first section of the book present us with the notion of love of neighbour as set forth in the Bible; in the second part we have three essays on the theological principles of charity; and the six essays which make up the last section are studies on the relations between people from the points of view of modern psychology, philosophy and sociology. In spite of the excellent work of the translators there are a number of essays in the third section that are not easy reading; but this is perhaps the most interesting and informative part of a book that contains much that is good.

HIS HEART IN OUR WORK. (Browne and Nolan; 15s.)

This book is a collection of some forty short essays by various authors selected from the pages of the American quarterly bulletin for priests, *Alter Christus*, for the years 1937-50. Clearly no one asked to write a four-page article for a periodical such as this would want to attempt anything very much in the way of speculative theology or scriptural exegesis. But is it expecting too much to ask for a breath of Scripture somewhere, even in a four-page essay written for what would be called a

simple devotional quarterly magazine? To turn to St Paul or the Gospels after an hour with this book is like moving out into the country from the oppressive heat of a big city. Apart from a few passing allusions there is very little on Christ the living Person of the Gospels, and the essays on the Sacred Heart give the impression of talking about a heart and not about a man. Significantly enough there is not a word anywhere about preaching. Given the circumstances and the occasion for the writing of the individual essays it would be unfair to criticize them too severely, but one cannot praise the decision to present them in the form of a book. It is the sort of book that 'busy pastors' tend to misuse.

MURDOCH SCOTT, O.P.

THE GOSPEL PRIESTHOOD. By Dom Hubert van Zeller. (Burns and Oates; 10s. 6d.)

This book is a collection of twelve monthly articles from *Emmanuel* of 1954 and so is loosely hung on the high points of the liturgical year. They are intended as reflections on various aspects of the priest's life on the parish and point the attitude of mind with which the priest must approach them. That is good—for it is useless to attack the surface symptoms and not rather the attitude that produces them. Dom Hubert is always stimulating and he calls these articles 'jabs from the short sword' to awaken the conscience, but sometimes one feels the jabs may produce only flesh-wounds, for there is a curious remoteness about it—very different from such a book as *Vessel of Clay* or *A Man Approved*.

It certainly cannot be due to lack of imagination, for the author's other books show he has plenty of that. Perhaps it is due to lack of context, not sufficiently down to earth. There is no mention of the loneliness of the secular priest's life, the burden of finance and form-filling, discouragement from leakage, stupidity of others and consciousness of one's own limitations. His spiritual advice is sound but lacks punch. And even today when book prices have soared, ten-and-six seems rather a large sum for a slight book of scarcely a hundred pages.

BRUNO DONOVAN, O.S.B.

THE NEW MAN. By Ronald Gregor Smith. (S.C.M. Press; 10s. 6d.)

This book, which bears the sub-title, Christianity and Man's Coming of Age, consists of five lectures originally given in Australia. At the beginning of his first lecture the author tells us that on the groundwork of a study of the biblical teaching about the main content of the religion of Israel he is attempting to present a view of the Christian understanding of man in history.

This 'main content of the religion of Israel' is, for the author, the belief in the transcendent God as encountered in the actual history of this people. In the N.T. and the early Church this belief continues and is indeed intensified through the supreme moment of encounter in Christ. Later, with the development of the medieval Church the sense of history is smothered under the all-pervading metaphysicizing of the time. The Renaissance is seen as essentially a recovery of the sense of history, of the Hebrew idea of this-worldliness. True, one aspect of that great coming of age, the Reform, did not sufficiently free itself from the medieval metaphysical trend, while the other, humanism, deviated into a closed self-sufficient autonomy of man, the implicit transcendence of the original impulse 'tending to give way before a naïve immanentism'. But the original impulse is there ready to be developed and fulfilled in the present age.

Such a bald summary as this is, of course, an inadequate description of this book; but it should at least give an indication of the line of argument. The author is not at pains to disguise his likes and dislikes. Catholicism, Barthianism, fundamentalism, liberalism, modern biblical theology and the present trend of the ecumenical movement are each in turn found wanting. 'The Church', says the author, 'cannot stand over the world with a whip nor can it get behind it with a load of dynamite. The whip and the dynamite, where available, would be better used upon itself.' And he is ready enough in this book to perform this service for the Church, his whips and high-explosives being mainly drawn from such writers as Bultmann and Bonhoeffer.

It is the last-named who is singled out from the 'many'—mainly contemporary German—writers to whom Mr Gregor Smith is so much indebted for these lectures; and indeed most of the last chapter consists of a commentary on a few intuitions of this Lutheran pastor executed so tragically near the moment of deliverance in a Nazi prison. Nevertheless the main intellectual influence behind this book is the more fully-formulated position of Bultmann. *Entmythologisierung* is the author's method of choice in bringing the new man who came of age so long ago somewhat belatedly into the full enjoyment of his inheritance. One wonders. Bultmann, he says, has traversed the gulf between conventional christianity and unchurched modern man, but the traversal has been solitary. One is not surprised. The fact is that this particular theological movement is fast developing into an arid existentialist scholasticism much more incomprehensible to the modern non-christian mind than anything from the Middle Ages. Through the attempt to rid the *kerygma* of what is called Myth, it is the Word that suffers. And by entering so thoroughly into the closed non-sacramental universe of modern man and so completely at the latter's level of

experience, it is perhaps paradoxical, but also little wonder, that these *dernier cri* parsons, so frantically almost hysterically set on depersonalizing themselves, should appear to the secular mind only more futilely 'parsonical' than ever. *The New Man* is indeed an eloquent book; but one is left wondering: Eloquent precisely of *what*?

RONALD TORBET, O.P.

OTHERWORLDLINESS AND THE NEW TESTAMENT. By Amos N. Wilder. (S.C.M. Press; 7s. 6d.)

The theme of this book is that the resistance of the modern world to the Christian message may be traced to a misjudgment on the part of Christians themselves as to the precise nature of the otherworldliness of their religion. 'We all realize', the author writes, 'that the Scriptures and the Christian faith have their crowning glory in that they relate us to God, admit us to the life eternal even here, and answer questions that have to do with Alpha and Omega. If to believe these things is to be otherworldly and escapist, we plead guilty. But we also know that the Gospel has taken on many distorted forms of otherworldliness. We can well generalize and say that the one great and telling accusation made against the Christian religion in our modern period is . . . that it evades responsibility for the problems of our life in this world. Here indeed our faith is really vulnerable.' Christianity, in fact, must be 'incarnational'.

Much that Dr Wilder has to say is of importance, but his book suffers from ranging rather wide. It might have been better if he had stuck closer to his title and give us a more thorough-going examination of the biblical data, instead of spending so much of his space discussing in rather secondary and not very illuminating terms the situation of modern man and the trends in recent protestant thought. In this way we might have had a more objective account of Christian otherworldliness. As it is, so much zeal against one distortion has rather led him to distortion in the opposite sense.

RONALD TORBET, O.P.

ST BERNADETTE. By Henri Petitot, O.P. (Trans. from the French.) (Mercier Press; 3s. 6d.)

For those who have the courage to face the fact that they are not using the means at their disposal in everyday life to practise holiness, this book will prove very helpful. It is an abbreviated portrayal of the life of St Bernadette, unspoilt by religious sentiment, which often carries the reader to the heights and leaves him with a transient admiration for the unobtainable. As Petitot says, in bringing his narrative to an end, Bernadette lived the thirteen years of her convent life with-

out the aid of revelations or ecstasies, relying only on the support of the Cross to climb with slow, painful steps, the path to Calvary. For most of us the way is the same, only we can't be bothered to come out of the rut and make the effort.

K.J.B.

IN SILENCE WITH GOD. By Benedict Baur, O.S.B. Translated by Elisabeth Corathiel-Nonan. (The Mercier Press; 12s. 6d.)

It may seem strange that a book which is meant to help the Christian to be perfect in himself and in all he does should be marred by so many imperfections. The paper cover is not very attractive, the print is small and closely packed, the number of misprints is remarkable. The translation, often enough, may read well when re-translated into German but not as it stands in English. 'In our natural state commandments do not sit easily upon us. . . .' (p. 146) is not the worst example. 'Unwisdom' (p. 139), 'unlovingness' (p. 152) and 'at-one-ment with God' are hardly successful neologisms. What to make of 'Brotherly love is the measuring rod of the standard we set . . .' (p. 131)? The difficulty of escaping the all-too-common failing of imperfect thought and expression is well illustrated by this description of our Lord on Calavary: 'How soiled . . . he stands before the pure eyes of the Father! Could he have taken upon himself greater ignominy than the sins of the whole humanity?—the sins of pride, of sensuality, of injustice and uncharitableness, of lewdness . . .' (p. 83). One is forced to use here '*pie exponere*' as a last resource. It is a pity that so much that is good and worthwhile in this book should be put together with less admirable material. In the preface the author professes to have followed the rule '*Nonum prematur in annum*'. It is to be regretted that others who helped to bring out this book failed to follow it.

C.V.

SAINTS AND THEIR ATTRIBUTES. By Helen Roeder. (Longmans Green; 15s.)

This is a book of reference by which the symbols of the saints, presented in alphabetic order, can be used to identify them in Christian art. There are also indexes of what symbols pertain to what saints, and of what they are patrons. To those who love to browse over the by-ways of things religious and artistic, there will be more satisfaction in this book than to the serious student whom the authoress envisages as using it, since the arrangement manages to be cumbrous, and accuracy is suspect when one finds St Francis de Sales describes as a Franciscan, St Thomas More included but not St John Fisher, SS. Firmin and Thomas of Cantelupe are given no attributes, though

pearing for the cities of which they are patrons. St John of Nepomuk appears under *Bridge* and is said to put his finger to his lips, but is not found under the latter heading as a symbol.

SILVESTER HUMPHRIES, O.P.

**LISTEN, SISTER.** By John E. Moffatt, S.J. (Mercier Press; 10s. 6d.)

Fifty little monologues full of insight here preserve, for nuns and all whom it may concern, spontaneous practical advice on how to be holy in a convent. It will be greatly enjoyed by those who appreciate that quiet world of feminine heroism which exists apart from the rest of us, in the souls of nuns, and is only seen by the world as in a glass darkly: the Sisters' outward life mirrors it, inevitably but faintly. Father Moffatt is at home in it. He must be outstandingly successful in giving conferences to nuns, especially about the 'little virtues'. Each of these fifty two-minute meditations throws a light on one or other of the little maxims of holiness which must govern and sustain daily life in the cloister. This is a book to give to any nun as a feast-day present. Its rare traces of half-childish femininity should be no deterrent even to the most mature and intelligent.

GERARD M. CORR, O.S.M.

**MYSTERY AND MYSTICISM. A Symposium.** (Blackfriars; 9s. 6d.)

This book which consists of six chapters of very different lengths was first published in French as a special issue of *La Vie Spirituelle*. One must first pay tribute to the unnamed translator or translators; the work is always smooth and readable without losing the flavour and idiom of the original French (except of course for Father Hislop's short chapter which has every appearance of being dressed in native costume). The purpose of the book is to clear up the confusion that exists about the popular notions of mysticism and mystery. Each has an authentic and misapplied meaning: mysticism, for instance, is commonly taken to refer exclusively to peculiar religious phenomena such as ecstasies, and its more important meaning is overlooked, namely the discipline of mind and body which the Christian must employ in communicating with God. In his first sub-title to the first chapter Père Plé expresses it neatly, 'Of how access to the inaccessible is given to us'. It is hardly necessary to point out how important this matter is today. It has for some time been obvious that the slightly 'queer' notions attached to the word 'mysticism' have shut off from many of us a whole world of prayer and contemplation which we should never have lost. That sort of thing, we have supposed, is all out of the ordinary and has nothing to do with most Catholics. Nothing could be further from the truth. Yet because of this many Catholics have been left ignorant of many fundamental truths of their religion. For mysticism, in its true sense,

should lead us to understand more deeply the mysteries of God and his works. But there again, the word 'mystery' has presented another obstacle: we have made it mean, as P. Bouyer points out, 'something that we must believe without trying to understand it'. So this book is given over to examining the full deep meaning of these two words. P. Plé in the first chapter outlines very clearly the ways and means by which man can have experience of God, and in Chapter II P. Bouyer explains at some length the meaning of mysterion or sacrament as it is understood at least up to the middle ages, namely a reality which veils but at the same time directs our minds to a more profound and sacred reality, God the maker. St Thomas spoke of the footprints of God in creation. Father Ian Hislop writes a very brief but very valuable chapter on myth which is a way of seeing all reality, man and society bound together as a whole and all alive. Father Hislop is rightly wary of exaggerating the importance of this, for it is certainly true that the language of myth becomes dangerous when it claims to be total and an exhaustive expression of truth. Nevertheless it might have been a good thing if the planners of this symposium had allowed more space for the discussion of this very valuable subject, for it is a medium that is most easily and widely understood. However, with the two additional chapters on St Paul's mysticism and on mystical phenomena this book is to be welcomed for the clarity and firmness of its exposition.

GERARD MEATH, O.P.

THE ESTRANGED FACE. By Catherine Eastwood. (Hollis and Carter; 16s.)

This book will set Novice Mistresses talking and the more experienced ones will agree, no doubt, that in spite of its defects it does throw some light on the meaning of vocation. A girl enters a convent with a mixture of motives difficult to assess, experiences great difficulties due to normal, natural repugnance to so mortified a life, perseveres in spite of everything for twenty-five years and rises to posts of great responsibility in the Congregation, and then finds it impossible to go on. She obtains a dispensation from vows, finds that she is so completely out of her element 'in the world' that life is hardly supportable any longer (in fact she decides at one point to put an end to it), and finally comes to spiritual rest through an illumination which suggests powerfully that God was with her, and very near her, all the time.

Catherine Eastwood, with a wealth of detail presented to her by the person in question (Mary Cleeves), and acting, it seems, with her sanction for the large introspective passages of the narrative, undertakes to tell us not only the whole story from the inside but what every step of such a strange journey signified from the point of view of vocation. This was of course an impossible task. The result is no more than a very plausible interpretation. God's ways are inscrutable and he writes

straight on crooked lines. It would have been best to leave it at that. Nevertheless the facts, faithfully related, are illuminating. The description of a humanly successful religious career rings true, yet retains the undoubtedly supernatural force that was there all the time. We are asked to sympathize with the Sister, at every stage, for a lack of fundamental understanding of charity and sacrifice. Everything, from posulancy to the final peace of soul, is confidently explained in a style and manner which combine thrilling narrative and challenging commentary. Such a spiritual journey as this one cannot be explained in terms of spiritual directors' generalizations. Only God, who searches the reins and the heart, who calls whom he will to religious life, knows the full meaning of it. It may be that the final illumination which brought peace to Mary Cleeves is the key to the whole strange story.

GERARD M. CORR, O.S.M.

A SPIRITUALITE DE LA COMPAGNIE DE JESUS. By J. de Guibert, S.J. (Institutum Historicum Societatis Jesu and Catholic International Book Centre; 43s.)

This work, undertaken by order of Father Ledochowsky, then General of the Society of Jesus, is published posthumously, the author having died in Rome in 1942 after having completed the first draft. Its publication, with certain slight corrections, bibliography, index, etc., is the work of Father Lamalle. Much of the material had already been published by the author in various periodicals. If, in the years which have elapsed since the author's death, new facts have been brought to light by the labours of others such as Father Leturia and Father Hugh Lahner, nevertheless the deep personal knowledge which he had of the original documents and the sobriety and sureness of his judgments give to the work of Father de Guibert a permanent value. Moreover, his work has the immense advantage of rendering easily accessible information otherwise scattered among different works and review articles.

As is normal with a work so general in scope and which, in any case, is described by the author himself as a 'sketch', some will be disappointed that certain aspects of the subject which they regard as particularly important have not received the attention which they consider proper. But they will not lack references to aid them in pursuing the matter further. Moreover, the author has deliberately avoided all polemics. He is throughout most cautious and nuanced in his judgments. One thing is certain: the tradition which represents Ignatian spirituality as a system of will training and nothing more, ego-centric, having little esteem of the Liturgy, divorced from doctrine and seeking merely a certain chivalric devotion by an appeal to the emotions, will find no foundation in these pages.

RICHARD BLUNDELL, S.J.

## NOTICES

Books intended to help us in meditation are probably more numerous today than at any time. Perhaps it is a reaction of individual freedom against the atmosphere of regimentation. It is certainly a helpful development of the principle that one must meditate as one can rather than according to the book. *Jean Galot, S.J.*, in *Le Coeur de Marie* (Desclée de Brouwer, 314 pp., n.p.) provides us with long, ingenious, devout chapters, his purpose being to etch in detail a large meditation-picture (rather than a literary portrait) of our Lady. His skill, unfortunately, is greater than his insight. He is so obsessed with the fear of exalting our Lady unduly that he treads the brink of minimism. His ideas on the imperfection of our Lady's knowledge cannot be taken seriously. Father McSorley's *Think and Pray* (Joseph McSorley, Paulist, Longmans, Green and Co., 9s. 6d.) is in the form of rhythmic reflective prayers in the manner of T. S. Eliot, or, nearer the subject, Caryll Houselander. One feels that it is the knack of rhythm rather than profundity of thought or choice of words that will find a wide public among devout souls for this book. In the Incarnation, the Blessed Sacrament, the Mass, Free Will, Sin, the Holy Ghost, the Last Judgment, Our Lady, the Sufferings of Christ, Father McSorley has found many thoughts which will be of real help to those who find informal meditation easier than the set piece. The revised and condensed edition of Nouet (*Meditations on the Life of Our Lord* by J. Nouet, s.j., Browne and Nolan; 18s.) is by contrast stereotyped and traditional: three-point meditations for every day in the year, eighteen meditations for festivals of the saints, twelve for monthly recollection days. The original eight hundred pages have been reduced to four hundred and fifty by condensation of the text. The matter needs no recommendation, the phraseology remains unidiomatic and quaint.

G.M.C.

OUR SEPARATED BRETHREN, by Rev. David Woodard. (Catholic Truth Society; 1s. H.326.) A pamphlet to be recommended. It is a plain factual statement of particulars, historical and actual, about the Church of England and the chief Free Church bodies. Prepared to see good and truth where they are to be seen; sympathetic and realist—not much however beyond good solid fact. There are two blemishes. The Low Church or Evangelicals are not more representative of the genius of the Church of England than other parties though they contribute to it. The section on Anglican orders is inadequate. A skilled Anglican theologian could make hay of it. Better to put a plain statement that the Catholic Church holds Anglican orders invalid—and leave it at that.

H.St.J.